

Appl. No. 10/722,273
Amdt. dated February 10, 2005
Reply to Office action of January 13, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-29 are presently pending in the application.

In this amendment, Claims 2, 4-6, 15-19, 23, 25, 28-29 have been amended.

Claims 1 and 14 have been canceled without prejudice to filing a continuation with respect thereto.

Claims 3, 7-13, 20-22, 24, 26-27 remain unchanged.

In this amendment, Applicants have complied with the Examiner's requirements to place the application in condition for allowance. Thus, this amendment complies with the requirements of 37 C.F.R. §1.116. Entry of the amendment and reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

In accordance with the new rules, all the claims are shown above, and the amended claims are shown in a redlined format. As set forth below, the amendments to the Claims are believed to place the Claims in condition for allowance. In view of the amendments, as discussed below, reconsideration of the Application and issuance of a Notice of Allowability are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action of January 13, 2005, the Examiner objected to Claims 6-13, 19-22 and 27 as depending from rejected base claims, but noted that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the elements of the base claims and any intervening claims. Applicant notes that Claim 9 is already in independent form, and Claims 10-13 and 27 depend therefrom. The Examiner entered no rejection against Claim 9, and hence, Claims 9-13 are believed to be allowable as currently presented.

Claim 6 depended directly from Claim 1 has been placed in independent form to include elements of Claim 1. Claims 7-8 depend from Claim 6 and Claims 2-5 and 28 and 29 have been

Page 9 of 10

02 February 2005
N:\Patents\EBCI applications\EBCI 08729\EBCI 8729US - Amendment B.doc

Appl. No. 10/722,273
Amdt. dated February 10, 2005
Reply to Office action of January 13, 2005

amended to depend from Claim 6. Hence, Claims 2-8, 28 and 29 are now believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claim 19 depended directly from independent Claim 14, and has been placed in independent form to include elements of Claim 14. Claims 20-22 as depend from Claim 19. Claims 15-18 and 23-26 have been amended to depend from Claim 19. Hence, Claims 15-26 are now believed to be in condition for allowance.

Independent Claims 1 and 14 have been canceled without prejudice to filing a continuation with respect thereto. In canceling Claims 1 and 14, Applicants are not conceding that the subject matter set forth therein is not patentable. Rather, Claims 1 and 14 have been canceled in order to expedite the issuance of a patent from this application.

In view of the foregoing, Claims 2-13 and 15-29 are believed to be in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowability with respect to these claims is thus respectfully requested.

Dated: 2/10/05

Respectfully Submitted,


Jonathan P. Soifer, Reg. No. 34,932
Polster, Lieder, Woodruff & Lucchesi, L.C.
12412 Powerscourt Drive, Suite 200
St. Louis, Missouri 63131
Tel: (314) 238-2400
Fax: (314) 238-2401
e-mail: Jsoifer@patpro.com